

DRAFT

Rockville Environment Commission Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday, March 13, 2012 Held at the Rockville City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue

Attendance

Commissioners Present: Steve Cardon, Julie Palakovich Carr, Kris Dighe, Anne Goodman, Alicia Hosmer, Beri Kravitz, Devinie Lye and Clark Reed

Commissioners Absent: John Becker

Guests: Councilmember Mark Pierzchala

Mark Charles, Environmental Management

Erica Shingara, Environmental Management

Susan Swift, Community Planning & Development Services

Rob Purkey, Community Planning & Development Services

Meeting Commencement

The meeting convened at 7:31 pm by Chair Dighe.

Preview of Amendments to City Code Chapter 5 (Green Building Program)

Susan Swift and Rob Purkey presented an overview of the scope and timeframe for conducting the three year review of Chapter 5 (Buildings and Structures) of the City Code. The review and regulatory update is driven by new recommendations from the International Construction Code (ICC) trade association which has been adopted by the State (which requires local land use jurisdictions to adopt codes which are at least as stringent). The initiative is expected to take considerably less time and effort than the comprehensive rewrite performed in 2010. Ms. Swift expects Introduction in early May and according to Maryland law, the Mayor and Council must adopt the amendments no later than July 1, 2012. Highlights of the anticipated changes were described and Commissioners asked questions of City staff. A link to a special webpage will be provided to all Commissioners.

Sustainable Maryland Certified

Erica Shingara briefed the Commission on Rockville's ongoing efforts to pursue this certification from the Maryland Municipal League and the University of Maryland. Ms. Shingara distributed copies of the accomplishment factsheets that form much of the basis of the City's application for certification. These add up to 215 points which is more than enough for certification (150). An additional factsheet may be prepared on the City's tree preservation program which will add another 15 points to the total. Ms. Shingara also distributed the final Green Team Mission statement which was approved at the February meeting. Commissioners are asked to review the final application package and endorse it during the April meeting.

High Performance Building Tax Credit

Erica Shingara also briefed the Commission on the status of the high performance (green) building tax credit proposal. The Mayor and Council instructed staff to develop a draft ordinance (City Code Chapter 22) amendment that creates the tax credit in time for inclusion in the FY 2013 budget. In a second step, the Mayor and Council will determine whether to include specific (general fund) dollars supporting the tax credit in the FY 2013 budget. The ordinance was introduced at the January 23 Mayor and Council meeting. The Mayor and Council held a public hearing on March 5, 2012. The comment period closed on March 9 with 7 commenters. A Discussion and Instruction session was held on March 26 and Adoption is planned for April 30, 2012.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Approval of the February 14, 2012 meeting minutes was moved by Cardon and seconded by Palakovich Carr with two corrections. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Environmental Excellence Awards

Commissioner Becker continues to develop a draft proposal describing specific award criteria and the nomination and presentation processes. The proposal will be taken up at the April meeting.

Montgomery College – Achievement in Green Building Technology/Design

After considerable discussion by the Mayor and Council, an article in the Rockville Gazette, and the submission of a February 10, 2012 letter from the College requesting reconsideration, the Commission voted (with Kravitz moving and Hosmer seconding) unanimously (8-0-0) to give further consideration of the College's environmental excellence award nomination. It was noted that the College did not yet have the LEED certification or sufficient energy bills to ensure that the building is really efficient. The Chair was authorized to send a letter to the College inviting them to update its nearly two year old nomination and requesting a facility tour of the Science Center (green building). If possible, the tour should be scheduled for March 27 or 28.

Ecobeco – Leadership in Environmental Practices

Ecobeco is an energy efficiency building auditor, home improvement and indoor air testing contractor located in Rockville. The company also helps its clients identify rebate and discount opportunities. The company provides its services to single family homes, townhomes and multi-family structures across central Maryland. In fact, Ecobeco has provided its service to over 200 Rockville homes; and has been previously recognized with awards from the Maryland Energy Administration and Angie's List. In addition to their business practice, the company provides speakers to community and civic organizations and events.

Prior to acting on the nomination, there was a detailed discussion on the propriety of bestowing the award to a green business. Some commissioners felt that successfully implementing a green business plan was not sufficient to merit the award. Others thought that the awards were created in part to encourage the establishment of green businesses in the City. It was suggested that in the future, a new award category be created solely for green businesses. After Cardon moved and Kravitz seconded, a 4-2-2 favorable vote was taken on Ecobeco's nomination.

Keith Sanderson – Carl Henn Individual Environmental Stewardship

Mr. Sanderson volunteers in a number of capacities to improve the City's environment and sustainability. He is supporting the creation of a photo library and watershed photo exhibit for the Croydon Creek Nature Center. He has given over 100 hours to invasive species removal in the Dogwood and Stoneridge Preserve areas; and has prepared several resident guides on invasive and native plants. Mr. Sanderson has also been very active in the stream monitoring program. He has obtained National Wildlife Federation certification for his property, and prepared a two hour program on "Enjoying Nature" to be presented at Croydon Creek Nature Center in June 2012. Reed moved and Cardon seconded a motion to approve the award. The motion passed, 8-0-0.

The awards are scheduled to be presented at the April 30, 2012 Mayor and Council meeting.

Hometown Holidays Preparations

Beri Kravitz presented an overview of the Commission's participation at Hometown Holidays. She has a call into event coordinator Colleen McQuitty to confirm these arrangements. Ms. Kravitz requested authority to purchase a prize wheel to use as part of the display booth and during other (e.g., recycling) presentations. Reed moved and Lye seconded a motion to spend approximately \$300 for the purchase of such a wheel. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Commissioner Cardon then asked for similar authority to purchase a rainbarrel for use at Hometown Holidays. He moved and Palakovich Carr seconded a motion to spend up to \$100 on a barrel which passed 8-0-0.

Commissioner Reed brought up the prospect of sponsoring an environmental film, perhaps also to be shown during Hometown Holidays. The film is called "YERT" for *Your Environmental Roadtrip*. He has attempted to contact the producer/distributor without success but will try to obtain pricing and availability information prior to the next meeting.

Environmental Management Report

Mark Charles presented the Environmental Management Report. Two of three stormwater vacancies have been filled. The third, a half time field position that has been primarily used to conduct field investigations of fats, oils and grease (FOG) management, is frozen for now. Ongoing FOG enforcement actions will be completed and tracked through to compliance but new inspections will not be scheduled until the position is filled.

Mr. Charles informed the Commission that the City has been identified as one of the top three residential recycling programs (for cities under 100,000) *in the nation*. The top program will be identified at a ceremony during a national conference on residential recycling scheduled for March 28-30, in the Dallas, Texas area.

Commissioners are invited to attend the following Mayor and Council meetings:

- April 2 – Earth Day Proclamation, & Discussion and Instruction on the Green Building Tax Credit Proposal
- April 30 – Environmental Excellence Awards presentation, and adoption of the Green Building Tax Credit

In addition, the next Multi-City Meeting is scheduled for April 24 in Hyattsville. Commissioners Becker, Dighe, Lye and Palakovich Carr are planning to attend.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:57 pm by unanimous acclamation.

Next Commission Meeting

The next Commission meeting is *tentatively* scheduled for **Tuesday, April 10, 2012 at 7:30 pm** in the **Diamondback Conference Room** of the **Rockville City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue**, Rockville, Maryland, 20850. The public is invited to attend.